

Opening Day

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It is now 10:00, local time in Barcelona, on 5 March, and the On-line Colloquium, which is already in swing, may be informally declared officially open, and enter into full swing.

At the moment there are more than 130 subscribers from the following countries:

Armenia, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, UK, USA, Yugoslavia, plus many addresses ending in <.com>, <.edu>, <.net>, <.org> that I cannot place geographically.

Some «housekeeping» details: 1) this on-line colloquium is itself an example of intercultural transfer—at the same time that we are observing and observing upon the questions involved in intercultural transfer we are also engaged in the very process we are observing; 2) language usage is not ideologically neutral—«English» is being treated as the *lingua franca* of the colloquium, and this decision is open to debate as well (personally, I have no objection to other languages being used in the discussion, nor have I any personal commitment to the English language (my parents spoke to me in Irish when I was a child), but the use of other

languages could restrict the intercultural transfer we are trying to carry out (some people will not be able to follow the discussion, depending on the language used)—that is, in itself, an interesting component of the debate, I think; 3) there are many people working in the field of translation who are doing many interesting things and who have many interesting things to say—if people want to announce on this list that they have material that may be of interest that is stored at their home Web site(s), then I would have no objection to such announcements being sent out across the list; on the other hand, I would refrain from sending a great deal of documentation across the list, because we cannot yet predict the volume of daily messages that may appear that are directly related to the debate at hand (if anyone on the list would like more documentation from individuals, they could contact those individuals directly, at their own e-mail address, which appears in each message, instead of across the list); 4) we will have to accustom ourselves to the global nature of this colloquium—each afternoon at 17:00 Barcelona time, I load the messages I have received during the day onto the «Messages» Web site—participants in the Americas become active that same day after I have gone home, and while participants in Asia and Oceania are already

asleep, and viceversa; 5) this on-line colloquium is an experiment in chaos as chaos is currently understood by scientists — emergent behaviour based on a limited number of predefined conditions (we will all learn about «virtual» organisation and «virtual» communication as the colloquium unfolds, in addition to learning about translation and intercultural transfer); 6) it may also be an example of game theory— we may discover how to carry out communicational «transactions» that are «cost» efficient in a «disaggregate» virtual time-space continuum (i.e., we may learn how not to «overload» the «virtual»

time-space continuum with too concentrated an information load per message, because that might put off efficient communication, nor to «underload» the virtual continuum to the point where it loses interest); 7) translation is a form of communication, so translators would be communicators, and that should help us; 8) even though the initial topic might not have had a direct appeal for every participant, I think we are already seeing how the initial topic facilitates debate in a number of related areas without losing sight of the initial topic.

Keep up the good work.